

YELLOWSTONE RIVER CONSERVATION DISTRICT COUNCIL

CONSERVATION DISTRICT MEMBERS: Carbon, Custer, Dawson, Park, Prairie, Richland, Rosebud, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Treasure, Yellowstone, McKenzie County North Dakota, RAC Chairman

Meeting Minutes -- April 17, 2008

Petroleum Club – Crowne Plaza Hotel

Members Present: Paul Gilbert, Sweet Grass CD; Tony Barone, Richland CD; Don Youngbauer, Rosebud CD and MACD; Phil Fox, Treasure CD; Bob Hector, Yellowstone CD; Dave Schwarz, Prairie CD; Jerry O'Hair, Park CD; Walter Rolf, Custer CD; John Moorhouse, RAC Chairman and Orvin Finsaas, McKenzie ND, CD.

Others Present: Warren Kellogg, NRCS/TAC; George Jordan, USFWS/TAC; Mike Penfold, YRF; Robert Lubbers, YRF/RAC; Laurie Zeller, DNRC; Susan Gilbertz, MSU-Billings/TAC; Karin Boyd, AGI/TAC; Tony Thatcher, DTM; Nicole McClain, YRCDC Coordinator; Laurie Kelley, Rosebud CD; Kelly Norwood, Project Assistant, and Carol Watts, Custer CD Administrator.

Chairman Don Youngbauer called the meeting to order at 10:00 am on Thursday, April 17, 2008. Introductions were made.

TAC update: (see Warren's attached notes) Warren Kellogg yielded the floor to Susan Gilbertz, MSU-Billings, who presented a request to the Council. The Western Heritage Center is seeking permission to archive the audio tapes created during the cultural inventory study. The tapes have historic value. The TAC felt that it would be a worthwhile project. Participants had been promised anonymity so release forms would be required. There would be some cost involved. Paul Gilbert made a motion to give Susan the Council's permission and support to seek funding for the project and for Nicole to write a letter of support to the Heritage Center. Phil Fox seconded and the motion carried by voice vote.

Karin Boyd presented the CMZ mapping as her part of the TAC update. It is expected that the CMZ mapping will become a valuable tool not just for the CES work, but also for cities, counties and individual landowners. Warren suggested that the Council sponsor and organize county workshops for this coming fall to show the public the CMZ maps and other products that the Council is producing.

Tony Thatcher did a presentation on the 310 Google web application prototype tool. Several conservation districts throughout Montana have shown an interest in using this web application for their own 310 program. It may eventually be used to display other resource data and information that would be readily available to the public.

It is hoped that each conservation district will sponsor a public meeting in their county to showcase these presentations. Specific write ups for each county could be developed. John Moorhouse said that the RAC would help with this outreach.

Jared McJunkin spoke for the National Wild Turkey Foundation. This organization's goal is improving habitat and hunting areas for wild turkeys. They are interested in discussing potential collaborative efforts. They will be placed on the YRCDC's mailing list.

George Jordan was on hand to explain the change to work order #5. The plan is to take the habitat mapping already completed by FWP and compare it with older aerial photos to show trends over a 50-year period. A pilot study could be done to determine if mapping during low flow conditions can be accurately extended to bank full conditions using a geomorphic approach. This is explained in Warren's attached notes. Orvin Finsaas made a motion to approve the fisheries habitat mapping pilot study, Paul Gilbert seconded and the motion carried by voice vote.

George Jordan also gave an update on what was happening at the fish bypass at the T&Y Canal. The FWP has set up a monitoring program and so far, several fish have been recorded using the bypass. The TAC will meet in Miles City on June 18th and it is hoped that a tour of the area can be planned at that time.

Warren said that the BOR was doing some work on the Big Horn and it may be possible to coordinate studies with them. The BOR did not receive the 2008 funding they expected and will only be acquiring and georeferencing aerial photography. Warren expressed the desire for the BOR to meet with the TAC and Council to explore opportunities for coordination. He stressed that the BOR should acquire aerial photos that are the same time series as those done on the Yellowstone. Jerry O'Hair made a motion to write a letter to the BOR requesting that they meet with the TAC regarding the Big Horn study and acquire photo series that would

be compatible with the photo series on the Yellowstone River main stem. Walter Rolf seconded the motion and it passed by voice vote.

Warren said that the TAC was going to begin showcasing a study reach, or multiple reaches, at each Council meeting. All the information/analysis for the reach would be reported to the Council as part of the TAC update

Warren introduced the idea of making transportation agencies aware of the CES tools that are available. There is currently some activity on river crossings and he felt that this would be an opportunity to use some of the CES information in their design considerations. Jim Robinson commented that it would take time and a lot of work to stay in contact with these people. John Moorhouse noted that this would be a good subject for the Roundtable discussion.

George Jordan gave a brief update on the Intake Fish Diversion. He said that the NEPA process is ongoing. A change has been made on the fish screen. George said it is unlikely that work would begin any time soon.

Jim Robinson informed the Council that Miles City formed a task force to study the flooding situation. They are requesting a flood damage reduction and restoration General Investigation from the ACOE. There is a river awareness day being planned for Miles City on April 29, 2008. Walter Rolf and Carol Watts will represent the YRCDC at a booth where the displays will be set up. Don Youngbauer is featured as one of the speakers. Anyone who would like to attend or work the booth is welcome.

Business meeting: Carol Watts handed out the financial reports. The first three pages were a printout from QuickBooks showing all the activity in the account since the last meeting. Carol noted the pass through grant had been reimbursed for wages from the RDGP-05 grant and the NFWF grant. The grant statement on the last page reflects the status of each grant. The statement has been reformatted. A correction was made on one of the balances and the reports were approved with John Moorhouse making the motion. Paul Gilbert seconded and the motion carried by voice vote. Carol stated there would be money set aside in an account for payroll liabilities in case an employee would quit and need to be paid for their accumulated leave. Carol asked the Council if they wanted to order pens for promotion purposes. The Council did not wish to order more at this time.

The minutes for the January 24, 2008 meeting were approved. Paul Gilbert made the motion, Tony Barone seconded and the motion carried by voice vote.

Laurie Zeller spoke to the council about using state voucher forms. The ones on hand were not the correct ones but Laurie will be sure that the YRCDC office receives them before the next meeting.

Updates:

Chairman's report: Don Youngbauer stated his February trip to Washington, D.C. was highly successful. It was a good time to be there as they were able to find personnel in their offices. Don left agates in each of the offices as a memento from the Yellowstone River. Don thanked them for the past funding and was able to speak to them about the products that had come out of the CES. He also visited with Assistant Secretary Woodley of the Army Corps of Engineers and Dana York, Associate Chief of NRCS.

Don said he spoke to the Lion's Club in Forsyth and he is looking forward to going to the River Summit in Miles City.

Concerning WRDA projects, Dave Schwarz said that Buffalo Rapids was screening all of their pumping plants and that their project is the first screening on the Yellowstone.

Coordinator's report: Nicole passed out the coordinator's report to the Council members. She said that she still had conservation districts to visit. Both Dave Schwarz and Tony Barone said that their Districts were willing to change meeting dates in order to accommodate her schedule. She will attend a flood awareness day in Livingston June 11, 2008.

Nicole stated that this was her first week back at work since having surgery. She expressed thanks to all who had sent cards and well wishes.

Nicole said that she spent a considerable amount of time making preparations for Don's trip to Washington, D.C. Kelly Norwood was helpful with the travel plans themselves.

Nicole has a commitment from MRL to do the Rail Tour and she is looking at the different options. The reason for the Rail Tour is to establish an open dialog with MRL/BNSF. It is possible that the August or September meeting will be held in Livingston in order to include the Rail Tour. Don Youngbauer and Nicole will be going to Missoula in May to do a presentation on the YRCDC for the MRL.

Nicole attended the "No Adverse Effects" conference; she was able to set up the YRCDC displays. She thinks that the YRCDC is in a leadership role, and that people in the state have a great respect for what the Council is doing.

The PPL Montana Community Fund grant application was submitted in January and the decision is pending. A grant application has also been submitted to Montana Land Information Act for wetlands mapping. That decision is due by 5/15/08. Ken Sambor of

Northern Great Plains Joint Venture has committed \$10,000.00 in funding \$2,000.00 of which will be applied as match. The remainder of the funding will also be used for wetlands and riparian fieldwork.

The RDGP-09 grant application deadline is May 15th. John Moorhouse offered to help Nicole write this grant application. The FY2009 Appropriations request for \$800,000 was submitted to Senators Baucus, and Tester and Representative Rehberg .

A budget request for \$125,000.00 was submitted for the YRDCD pass-through funding.

The MATE show exhibit was well received with most of the interest centered on Russian olive management.

Agency Update: Carla Lawrence, Beartooth RC&D (Resource Conservation and Development) spoke about the Fuels for Schools project that is being pursued by RC&Ds. Samples have been taken of Russian olive trees to see if there is a potential for chipping them as a source of fuel. It is possible that this could be a potential matching source for the RDGP grant application.

RAC Update: John Moorhouse updated the Council on vacancies and recruitment. John furnished the Council with the BMP document on Russian olives which he had asked Kelly to embellish. John wants the Council to develop a format that all the BMPs will be based on so that they will be recognized as an YRDCD product. The Council agreed that was a good idea. The RAC is now working on a BMP for salt cedar and John handed out the first draft of that document.

John also had a petition from the Native Plant Society and the Audubon Society to put Russian olive on a Montana statewide noxious weed list as a category 4. John does not support this but thought it should be brought to the Council's attention.

John reported the RAC met on February 6, 2008. The minutes of that meeting were in the Council member's packets. The RAC thinks they could better serve in their duty of developing recommendations for the YRDCD if they were always included in the decision process for the studies. Phil Fox suggested that the RAC could present both sides of a controversy to the Council.

John recommends more input/feedback between the RAC, TAC and Council in forming BMPs. This also follows for other groups not normally represented by conservation districts.

The RAC would like to add a qualification to RAC membership requirements stating that the candidate must have the approval of a majority of current RAC membership. Phil Fox commented that this could create a bias. The Council will accept recommendations from the RAC. The RAC Chairman can vote as directed by the RAC membership. Moorhouse agreed to rewrite the proposal to state that the Council will ask for a recommendation for the RAC concerning new RAC members.

North Dakota will be added to the resident requirements for RAC members.

RAC Committee members serve without salary and would like to be reimbursed for attending RAC and YRDCD meetings. They are currently paid mileage for attending RAC meetings. Laurie Zeller recommended that before the YRDCD decides to pay stipends and other travel expenses for the RAC, the RAC should develop a proposal for the YRDCD to consider. If the YRDCD agreed with the proposal to pay the RAC members stipends and other travel expenses, the RAC should be given a budget for travel reimbursements according to YRDCD policy and allocate the funding as they desired but they would need to stay within the budgeted amount. Carol Watts commented that the standing rules for the Council would need to reflect that in some way. Dave Schwarz made a motion that the RAC should devise a budget with per diem and present to the Council for approval. Bob Hector seconded. The motion carried. The RAC is contemplating meeting on a quarterly basis; twice a year in person and having two tele-conferences yearly.

The RAC has been asked to look into the Outreach and Education scope of work. Mike Penfold and John Pulasky are considering different media formats such as DVDs. The goal is to reach the public with information on Yellowstone River resources and about best management practices.

Open items/Discussion: Carla Lawrence commented that Russell Nemitz does a good job of informing the public on his radio show and the Council should seek to make use of that facility.

Public Comment: Carol made a comment on behalf of Kenny Nemitz and the expansion the Clean Water Act. She had an article from the Agri-News publication for review. Kenny had expressed concern at the last Council meeting but did not have any available information. This article reports the Governor's support of a bill that would strengthen the Clean Water Act.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Watts, CCCD Administrator

Yellowstone River Technical Advisory Committee
Meeting Notes - April 15-16, 2008
Billings, MT

Cumulative Effects Analysis

Cumulative Effects Analysis: Burt William led the discussion on cumulative effects. He introduced a couple sustainable flow models that may be helpful to the analysis. They include TNC's Ecological Limits of Hydrologic Alteration (ELOHA) model and the ACOE's Ecosystems Function Model (EFM). It was suggested that those who work with these models be either invited to a future TAC meeting or have a teleconference with them to explore their potential applicability to the Yellowstone River CES. The consensus from the TAC is that the major drivers of cumulative effects are:

1. Hydrology
2. Geomorphology
3. Land Use

Between now and our next TAC meeting, Burt asked that we will send suggestions to him on how we might break down these three drivers into specific resource categories to help in identifying relationships.

Study Reach Analysis: Karin Boyd suggested that we should start highlighting specific study reach(s) to focus a portion of our TAC meeting on. Available reach data, maps, and photos for each reach will assist in the discussion on ecological/anthropogenic relationships and cumulative effects. This data compilation and analysis will also lend itself to completing the Yellowstone River CES data summary (atlas) for each reach.

"No-Adverse Impact" conference held in Fairmont Hot Springs last February was attended by Nicole McClain, Karin Boyd, and Jim Robinson. Bottom line: the approach does not appear to have much applicability to the Yellowstone River CES.

Socioeconomic

Cultural Inventory: The Western Heritage Center in Billings has expressed interest in archiving the audio interviews collected during Susan Gilbertz's cultural inventory. Written permission would need to be granted from the interviewees for their interviews to be archived. Funding would also be needed (~15K), however the TAC felt that this would not fall under the Cumulative Effects Study cost-share agreement. The Council should be made aware of this opportunity and perhaps one or more of the CDs might be willing to sponsor the project. Susan will give a brief overview to the Council.

Economics: Warren Kellogg and Burt Williams met with Ray Rasker with Headwaters Economics – a nonprofit organization in Bozeman – to discuss the current economics scope of work and the economics vacancy on the TAC. They are not likely to serve on the TAC, but they may be interested in responding to an economics scope of work RFP. Mr. Rasker may also submit a proposal for a pilot study for one county to provide a review of the economics scope's methodology and deliverables.

Biology

Fisheries:

- Fisheries Scope of Work: George Jordan up-dated the TAC on some recent set backs with the fisheries study. MSU-Bozeman has had difficulty recruiting a PhD student to do the work. Since they will likely not be able to do any field work this summer, this will delay the study for another year. At our June TAC meeting, we will decide whether it would be feasible to redirect the 70K currently reserved for this year's fisheries work over to another scope of work.
- Aquatic Habitat Mapping: Work Order #5 (GIS Contract with DTM) was revised to refocus the work towards a pilot study on 15 prototype reaches to determine if fish habitat mapping during low flow conditions can be accurately extended to bank full conditions using a geomorphic approach. The results from this pilot study will determine whether it will be worth pursuing the mapping on the remainder of the river. The pilot study will be completed by May. There will be additional funding needs to expand the mapping if the pilot study results are encouraging. It was noted that the channel bathymetry collected in Stillwater, Yellowstone, and Dawson counties was helpful in mapping habitat. Don Youngbauer, YRCDC Chair, was asked for tentative approval in early April so the pilot study could begin. Interim approval was given pending full approval from the Council at their April 17th meeting.

Demonstration Projects

- Buffalo Rapid Irrigation District (BRID) Fish Screen: BRID will be installing a self-cleaning fish screen on their Shirley pumping plant upstream from the Powder River confluence. NRCS and USFWS will be contributing funds to the project; BRID will do the construction.
- Tongue River Fish Passage: Brad Schmitz (Miles City FW&P) reported that the T&Y fish by-pass structure appears to be working. FW&P is evaluating fish use of the by-pass during the spring and summer. It was suggested that the TAC and Council do a field tour of the fish by-pass this summer. The upstream S-H Diversion has a draft EA and 65% design available for review with construction as early as this coming fall. Fish passage for the upper most diversion, Mobley Diversion, is currently under discussion with the landowner.

- Pryor Creek Fish Passage: Keith Kerbel (Billings DNRC) and Bob Hector led a discussion on their experiences with water availability on Pryor Creek over the last 20 years. Pryor Creek quits flowing some years during the late summer months. The creek is currently over appropriated and was designated a closed basin in 1999 for all new surface and ground water development. The DNRC has tentatively agreed to complete a preliminary hydrology characterization of the watershed and assist the Pryor Creek residents in setting up a water flow monitoring network.

Best Management Practices/Position Paper

Transportation Infrastructure: The east bridge (Hwy 89) in Livingston is scheduled for replacement in 2010. The TAC will recommend to the YRCDC that they consider having the Governor's office co-sponsor discussions with the appropriate agencies and organizations on:

- The replacement of the Livingston east bridge and design alternatives on the Glendive railroad bridge.
- Ensuring that decision-makers are aware of the Yellowstone CES data to augment their long-term planning and permitting of transportation infrastructure within the Yellowstone River corridor.

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Intake Diversion: George Jordan reported that there is an agency scoping meeting on the Intake Diversion scheduled for May 1st in Billings. Burt Williams will represent the TAC at this meeting.

Information Management/Public Outreach

Information Management and GIS Development Scope of Work: Nicole reported that there hasn't been any progress made on the revision since last January.

310 Permit Database/Web Application: Tony Thatcher (DTM) gave a demonstration to the TAC on the latest version of the Google Earth 310 Permit project. It has been a slow and frustrating process to address their security issues associated with hosting this web application on the DNRC server; however it appears that most of these problems should soon be resolved. There is huge potential to expand the utility of this tool to other CES data making the information more readily available and understandable to the public.

Public Outreach Strategy: Mike Penfold and John Pulaskey gave a presentation on an outreach approach that they have been working on. They are proposing that the Council's public outreach strategy focus initially on their Russian olive and Salt Cedar BMPs. By developing a public outreach plan for these two BMPs, it would serve as a prototype before expanding the public outreach process/format to other CES-related activities. The TAC offered their assistance when needed.

NRIS Contract: The existing contract with Natural Resource Information System (NRIS) expires on June 30, 2008. Jim Robinson will work with NRIS over the next couple months to assure that all current CES data has been processed correctly and posted to the Yellowstone River web site by the end of June. Sibyl Govan, NRIS Projects Manager, has resigned from NRIS. Gerry Daumiller is the new manager.

Hydrology, Hydraulics, and Geomorphology

Big Horn River Side Channel Investigation: Clayton Jordan reported that the funding for this study did not materialize for this fiscal year. The BOR will be only compiling and georectifying past aerial photography for that 16 mile reach. The TAC will recommend to the Council that they send a letter to the BOR Area Office Manager requesting the following:

- Have the BOR people doing the study to meet face-to-face with the TAC this summer to discuss coordination opportunities between their Big Horn Side Channel study and the Yellowstone CES work.
- Request that they complete the photo series for the entire Big Horn River below Yellowtail Dam for the same time series already completed on the Yellowstone River (early 1950s and mid-1970s). The Council may want to consider assisting with the additional cost of expanding the effort if the BOR does not have sufficient funds.

Channel Migration Zone Mapping: Karin Boyd gave a presentation on the progress and methodology behind the CMZ mapping effort. They are near completion on this project with only some minor edits and revisions yet to be incorporated into the maps and final report. The TAC went through a brainstorming session on how best to get this information out to the public:

- Individual county meetings/workshops organized by the local CD with invitations to the county/city elected officials, county planning/floodplain/sanitarian staff, Extension agents, and local MDT and railroad field supervisors.
- CD Administrators Area meetings
- BNSF and Montana Rail Link
- Montana Dept. of Transportation
- Realtors Workshop (education credits)

These workshops would include geographically-specific CMZ maps to encourage proactive planning in the river corridor, illustrate particularly vulnerable reaches, and identify potential restoration projects. Members of the Council and RAC members might also help the CDs organize the workshops. We would ask Nicole to secure the necessary funding for developing informational material and to pay expenses for the CMZ technical presentations.

Yellowstone River Human Impacts Timeline: Tony Thatcher provided an up-date on the GIS mapping of physical features over a 50+ year time frame (1950/1976/1995/2001/2004/2005). This effort will document spatial and temporal trends of human-constructed features on the river and floodplain. This project is limited to Stillwater, Yellowstone, and Dawson counties which currently have the Lidar terrain mapping and 2004 high resolution orthophotography. This contract is scheduled to be completed by June 30th.

Lidar - Topographic Mapping: Jim Robinson reported on the progress of the Lidar topographic mapping for the remaining counties. Data collection was completed last fall and the processing of the data has taken place over the winter. A prototype reach was reviewed late last winter and feedback was given to the contractor by Jim Robinson and ACOE staff. Final delivery of the topographic data is scheduled for this summer.

Miles City: Jim Robinson reported that the Miles City Council recently decided to request a flood damage reduction and restoration General Investigation (GI) study from the ACOE. There are also Flood Awareness Day events scheduled in Miles City and Livingston in May.

Miscellaneous

Budget:

- Eric Laux (ACOE) reported that nothing has changed; there is 200K in the President's budget for FFY 2009. Don Youngbauer mentioned that the Council formally submitted a FFY 2009 appropriations request for 800K through Montana's Congressional delegation a few months ago. There has not been any feedback so far on the status of that request.
- The requested add-on for the DNRC line item budget for the YRCDC will likely not be included in DNRC's budget request for SFY 2010/2011. To pursue the budget increase, the YRCDC will need to justify their budget request directly to the 2009 Legislature.
- 2009 RRG application: Nicole is committed to having a RRG grant application submitted to DNRC by May 15th. The TAC brainstormed some ideas to include in the application: 1) finish the riparian field work, 2) expand on the reach summary atlas, and 3) sponsor several Russian olive/Salt Cedar removal demonstration projects along the Yellowstone River that would include slash disposal options (biofuel), cost analysis of removal approaches by density, and pre-and post-condition monitoring to evaluate levels of success. Members of the TAC will provide assistance as time allows.

Rail Tour: Nicole McClain reviewed tentative plans for a train tour (Montana Rail Link) from Livingston to Huntley scheduled for either August or September. Details are yet to be worked out. The TAC offered to identify potential sites along the river to stop at along the way.

TAC Membership: Burt Williams has been speaking with a few potential candidates to fill the economist slot on the TAC. We will continue with that process and hopefully bring a recommendation to the Council in the near future.

June TAC Meeting: The next TAC meeting is scheduled for June 18th in Miles City. In conjunction with our meeting, we will do a field tour at the T&Y fish passage and arrange to look at the Russian olive removal project on Fort Keogh.

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Big Horn River Side Channel Investigation: Clayton Jordan reported that the funding for this study did not materialize for this fiscal year. The BOR will be only compiling and georectifying past aerial photography for that 16 mile reach. The TAC will recommend to the Council that they send a letter to the BOR Area Office Manager requesting the following:

- Have the BOR people doing the study to meet face-to-face with the TAC this summer to discuss coordination opportunities between their Big Horn Side Channel study and the Yellowstone CES work.
- Request that they complete the photo series for the entire Big Horn River below Yellowtail Dam for the same time series already completed on the Yellowstone River (early 1950s and mid-1970s). The Council may want to consider assisting with the additional cost of expanding the effort if the BOR does not have sufficient funds.

Channel Migration Zone Mapping: Karin Boyd gave a presentation on the progress and methodology behind the CMZ mapping effort. They are near completion on this project with only some minor edits and revisions yet to be incorporated into the maps and final report. The TAC went through a brainstorming session on how best to get this information out to the public:

- Individual county meetings/workshops organized by the local CD with invitations to the county/city elected officials, county planning/floodplain/sanitarian staff, Extension agents, and local MDT and railroad field supervisors.
- CD Administrators Area meetings
- BNSF and Montana Rail Link
- Montana Dept. of Transportation
- Realtors Workshop (education credits)

These workshops would include geographically-specific CMZ maps to encourage proactive planning in the river corridor, illustrate particularly vulnerable reaches, and identify potential restoration projects. Members of the Council and RAC members might also help the CDs organize the workshops. We would ask Nicole to secure the necessary funding for developing informational material and to pay expenses for the CMZ technical presentations.

Yellowstone River Human Impacts Timeline: Tony Thatcher provided an up-date on the GIS mapping of physical features over a 50+ year time frame (1950/1976/1995/2001/2004/2005). This effort will document spatial and temporal trends of human-constructed features on the river and floodplain. This project is limited to Stillwater, Yellowstone, and Dawson counties which currently have the Lidar terrain mapping and 2004 high resolution orthophotography. This contract is scheduled to be completed by June 30th.

Lidar - Topographic Mapping: Jim Robinson reported on the progress of the Lidar topographic mapping for the remaining counties. Data collection was completed last fall and the processing of the data has taken place over the winter. A prototype reach was reviewed late last winter and feedback was given to the contractor by Jim Robinson and ACOE staff. Final delivery of the topographic data is scheduled for this summer.

Miles City: Jim Robinson reported that the Miles City Council recently decided to request a flood damage reduction and restoration General Investigation (GI) study from the ACOE. There are also Flood Awareness Day events scheduled in Miles City and Livingston in May.

Miscellaneous

Budget:

- Eric Laux (ACOE) reported that nothing has changed; there is 200K in the President's budget for FFY 2009. Don Youngbauer mentioned that the Council formally submitted a FFY 2009 appropriations request for 800K through Montana's Congressional delegation a few months ago. There has not been any feedback so far on the status of that request.
- The requested add-on for the DNRC line item budget for the YRCDC will likely not be included in DNRC's budget request for SFY 2010/2011. To pursue the budget increase, the YRCDC will need to justify their budget request directly to the 2009 Legislature.
- 2009 RRG application: Nicole is committed to having a RRG grant application submitted to DNRC by May 15th. The TAC brainstormed some ideas to include in the application: 1) finish the riparian field work, 2) expand on the reach summary atlas, and 3) sponsor several Russian olive/Salt Cedar removal demonstration projects along the Yellowstone River that would include slash disposal options (biofuel), cost analysis of removal approaches by density, and pre-and post-condition monitoring to evaluate levels of success. Members of the TAC will provide assistance as time allows.

Rail Tour: Nicole McClain reviewed tentative plans for a train tour (Montana Rail Link) from Livingston to Huntley scheduled for either August or September. Details are yet to be worked out. The TAC offered to identify potential sites along the river to stop at along the way.

TAC Membership: Burt Williams has been speaking with a few potential candidates to fill the economist slot on the TAC. We will continue with that process and hopefully bring a recommendation to the Council in the near future.

June TAC Meeting: The next TAC meeting is scheduled for June 18th in Miles City. In conjunction with our meeting, we will do a field tour at the T&Y fish passage and arrange to look at the Russian olive removal project on Fort Keogh.